

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for his thorough review of the present application. Claims presented for prosecution in this Application are claims 21 and 22, claim 22 having been newly proposed. In the present Office Action, the Examiner has withdrawn his previous indication of allowability. Claim 21 has been objected to because of a number of informalities. Claim 21 has also been rejected as being indefinite. Claim 21 has also been rejected over cited prior art. In view of Applicants' amendments and remarks below, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 21 and 22 are now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the present Response be considered and entered, the rejections to the claims be withdrawn, and that the case now be passed to issue.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claim 21 because a number of informalities. In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 21 in conformance with the Examiner's suggestions to correct these informalities.

In view of this amendment, Applicants respectfully request that the objections to claim 21 be withdrawn.

The 35 USC 112, Second Paragraph Rejection of Claim 21

The Examiner has rejected claim 21 as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In particular, the Examiner has alleged that the recitation "a forth fold back against the third fold" in line 10 is misdescriptive and/or inaccurate since the forth fold 118 is not against the third fold 116, but instead is rather spaced away from the third fold, not against it.

Without conceding to the validity of the Examiner's rejection, and solely in an effort to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended independent claim 21 to further clarify this claim limitation. In particular, claim 21 as currently amended, recites, *inter alia*, "bending a fourth fold back ***adjacent*** said third fold ***to define a female groove*** for accommodating said male end portion therein."

Applicants respectfully submit that the amended claim language is entirely accurate and that one of ordinary skill in the art would readily understand that a female groove is formed between the third and fourth folds by bending the fourth fold back adjacent the third fold.

In view of this amendment, Applicants respectfully request that the instant rejection on this ground be withdrawn.

The 35 USC 102(b) Rejection of Claim 21 over Breehl

The Examiner has withdrawn his indication of allowability of claim 21 and has rejected claim 21 as being anticipated by Breehl. Applicants traverse this rejection and respectfully assert that Breehl does not disclose or render obvious each and every element of, at least, independent claim 21, as currently amended.

Independent claim 21, as currently amended, recites,

"A method for forming a seam for ductwork having a male end portion integrally formed at a distal end of a duct wall, said method comprising the steps of:

integrally forming a female end portion at another distal end of said duct wall;

integrally forming said female end portion includes bending a first fold beginning at a break point of said duct wall to extend at a hemmed angle towards an interior of said ductwork and bending a second fold back upon said first fold to extend substantially adjacent to said break point *to form a hemmed ridge interior of said ductwork*, bending a third fold beginning substantially adjacent said break point and extending substantially parallel to said duct wall, and bending a fourth fold back adjacent said third fold to define a female groove for accommodating said male end portion therein;

integrally forming a sealing fold at a distal end of said fourth fold; and

bending said sealing fold transverse to said female groove prior to said male portion being inserted into said female groove.” (Emphasis added).

Applicants respectfully submit that Breehl does not disclose a method of forming a seam for ductwork wherein a female end portion is formed, *inter alia*, by bending a first fold beginning at a break point of the duct wall to extend at a hemmed angle towards an interior of the ductwork and bending a second fold back upon the first fold to extend substantially adjacent to said break point to form a hemmed ridge interior of said ductwork, as explicitly recited in independent claim 21, as currently amended.

Applicants note that the Examiner had previously indicated that claim 21 was allowable on the mistaken belief that prior claim 21 recited the limitation of “a hem interior of the ductwork.” (Office Action, page 2). In view of the Examiner’s withdrawal of his indication of allowance, Applicants have amended claim 21 to now explicitly recite that a hemmed ridge is formed interior of the ductwork. In stark

contrast to the present invention, and as shown in Fig. 4 of Breehl, the “first fold” 12 “extending at a hemmed angle towards an interior of the ductwork” 5, “second fold” A1 (as alleged by the Examiner) and rounded edge or nose 13, as disclosed in Breehl, are located outside of the ductwork.

As neither Breehl, nor any of the other cited references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every element of independent claim 21, as currently amended, Applicants respectfully submit that the present rejection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

New Claim 22

Newly proposed claim 22 is also believed to be allowable. Similar to independent claim 21, claim 22 recites,

“A method for forming a seam for ductwork having a male end portion integrally formed at a distal end of a duct wall, said method comprising the steps of:

integrally forming a female end portion at another distal end of said duct wall;

integrally forming said female end portion includes bending a first fold beginning at a break point of said duct wall to extend at a hemmed angle towards an interior of said ductwork, bending a second fold back upon said first fold to extend substantially adjacent to said break point, bending a third fold beginning substantially adjacent said break point and extending substantially parallel to said duct wall, and bending a fourth fold back against said third fold to define a female groove for accommodating said male end portion therein;

integrally forming a sealing fold at a distal end of said fourth fold; and

bending said sealing fold transverse to *and at least partially overlapping* said female groove prior to said male portion being inserted into said female groove.” (Emphasis added).

As shown in Figs. 2 and 4 of Breehl, the resilient lip or “sealing fold” 17 of Breehl extends away from the “female groove” A2 (as alleged by the Examiner). In stark contrast, and as recited in claim 22, the sealing fold of the present invention at least partially overlaps or extends towards the female groove 106. Applicants have reviewed Breehl and the other cited reference of record and can find no disclosure or suggestion of this feature. As neither Breehl, nor any of the other cited references, either alone or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every element of claim 22, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 22 is allowable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 21 and 22 are allowable, and an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number below to expedite resolution of any issues that the Examiner may consider to remain unresolved. In particular, should a Notice of Allowance not be forthcoming, the Examiner is requested to phone the undersigned for a telephonic interview, an Examiner's Amendment, or the like, while the outstanding issues are fresh in the mind of the Examiner.

Authorization is hereby give to charge our deposit Account No. 13-0235 for the fee for the one-month extension of time. It is believed that no additional fees are owed. However, authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 13-0235 in the event any additional fees are owed.

Respectfully submitted,

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